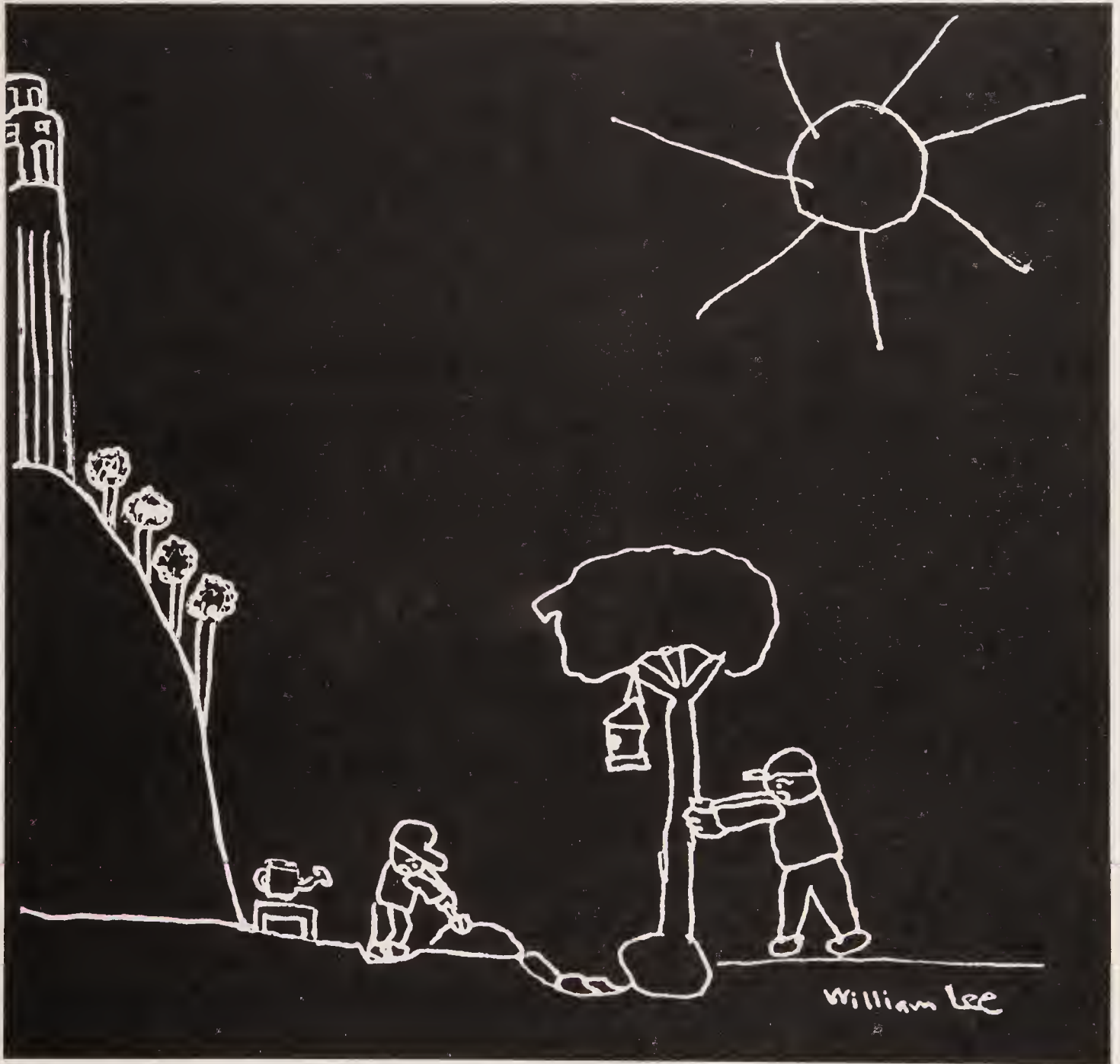


The Semaphore

Issue 133

September 1995



FEATURE

We're Planting 400 Trees, page 18

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480 Vallejo, 397-2175

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Advertising Manager: Steve Hord,

50 Alta, 781-1117

Business Manager: Joe Luttrell,

28 Napier Lane, 255-6400

Layout: Goldy VanDeWater,

826-3789

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260 Bay Street, 331-9595 x733

Kara Parsons,

1850 Powell, 983-0248

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COVER: Drawing by William Lee, a ten-year-old summer student at Tel Hi Neighborhood Center.

The Semaphore is a publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers for its members. Articles, except for the summary of Board of Directors' Motions, do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Association or its Officers, but are the opinions of the writers of the individual signed articles. The Association can take no responsibility for their content. This membership publication is not to be reprinted or disseminated without permission in writing.

THD Board Resolutions

June 13, 1995:

It was approved that a letter drafted by Dick Marshall be sent by THD as its position regarding the demolition of a building at 1440 Kearny Street.

Also approved was Charlie Farruggia's management of THD sweatshirt sales, including financial accountability to the treasurer, and deliveries when appropriate.

July 11, 1995:

The draft of the Telegraph Hill Scenic Special Use District Zoning Ordinance as submitted by the Committee was adopted.

We resolved to send a postcard to the membership asking for each member's approval or disapproval of this proposed ordinance. The results are published in this issue of *The Semaphore* and have been submitted to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, together with a letter stating the Board's unanimous approval.

Results of the Postcard Vote on the Telegraph Hill Scenic Special Use District Zoning Ordinance

In July a draft of the Ordinance was unanimously approved by THD's Board of Directors, then mailed to THD's voting membership with a postcard ballot. The Executive Committee tallied the votes received and reported that 142 members voted for the Ordinance, 16 against.

The Ordinance was delivered to the Board of Supervisors on August 8, 1995.

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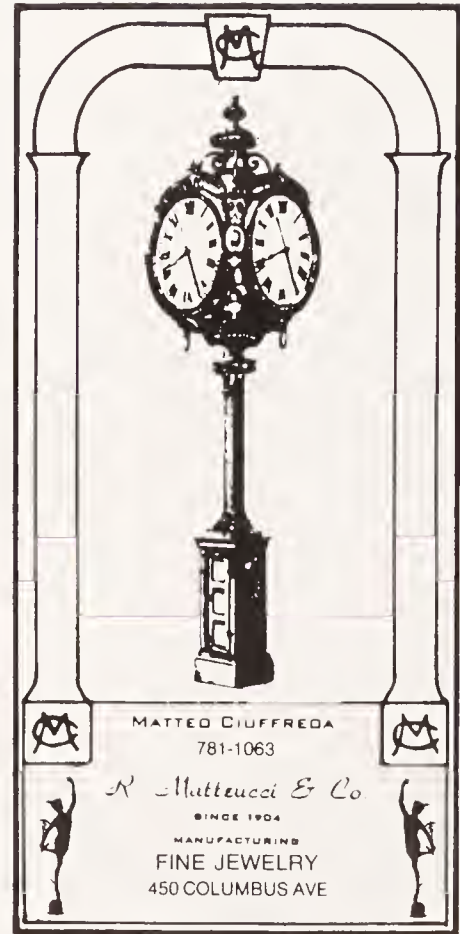
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We are in pursuit of Telegraph Hill's potential. Together in this pursuit we work on neighborhood projects and fight neighborhood battles. Together we learn about the Hill's history and envision the Hill's future.

In big and little ways we can work to protect and enhance the Hill. The time we devote to our community is evident and we all appreciate each other's efforts. From picking up trash to attending member social functions, from friendly 'hellos' on the corner to fighting unsuitable developments, from helping to slap labels onto envelopes to planting street trees, there is something for every taste for our members.

Working for the Hill, on projects big or small, increases our sense of belonging to this community. We urge everyone—old timers and brand new faces—to offer a bit of time to the committees. If you can be available to join us in stamping envelopes for an hour some evening, or if you have a keen interest in one of the subjects reported in this *Semaphore*, please give one of the Board members or Committee Chairs a call. You will be amply rewarded by meeting new people and bonding even more closely to the Hill. Telegraph Hill needs you!

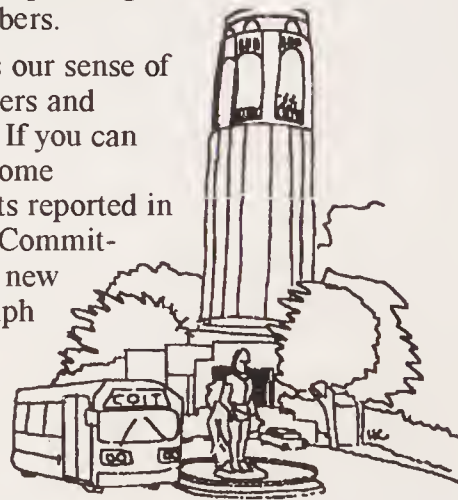
The City Attorney's office has a Code Enforcement Task Force. If you would like to report violations of the Fire Code, the Building Code, the Housing Code and the Health Code on properties that have become hazardous to occupants and neighbors you can call the Task Force at 554-3977. Tell them about the situation and they will see what should be done.

I want to say a special thank you to Rod Freebairn-Smith, Arts Commissioner and past THD president, who livened our July board meeting with an informative presentation, complete with slide show, on the projects of the San Francisco Arts Commission.

Finally, since we will be ordering more letterhead stationery, we thought it would be a good time to solicit ideas for a letterhead logo. Submit examples to P.O. Box 330159, SF 94133.

President's Letter

From Mia Morrill



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See page 31 for more neighborhood restaurant listings.

Within an area hardly larger than a football field between 20 and 25 arson fires have occurred on Telly Hill and in North Beach during February to the end of July. Residents are alarmed (no pun) and apprehensive as to where the next one will occur.

Captain Carr of the Arson Task Force stated that these have been trash fires of combustible garbage, paper, cardboard, and contents of the small, blue recycle bins. This trash is usually pushed against a building or vehicle and lighted. Despite nighttime surveillance of ATF officers and policemen from Central Station, none have been successful in learning motivation or pattern of these neighborhood fires. There have been no eyewitnesses. All the fires have occurred between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.

One solution may be that all of us should become party animals between those hours and ensure that firemen are invited to the festivities.

A better suggestion from Capt. Carr is be aware of strange people who have no reason to be in the neighborhood. Occupant density on Telegraph Hill and North Beach creates much trash. The

Fire Department runs daily inspections to look for accumulation of trash outside of buildings and occupants are requested to remove it. Perhaps it would be better to put recycle bins out, early in the morning, rather than at night. One fire victim pointed out that some of the fires were in buildings which showed a "FOR RENT" sign.

If necessary, do you know how to dial 911 in total darkness?

Arson Causes Alarm

by Helen von Ammon

Hill Crime Statistics

by Pat Lorentzen

For the MAY-JULY Period

TYPE:	1994	1995	% CHANGE
Homocide	0	0	
Rape	0	0	
Robbery	26	15	
Assault	26	21	
Burglary	32	29	
Theft	122	116	
Auto	83	57	
Other	120	186	
TOTAL	409	424	3.7%

North Beach Major Crimes will no longer be calculated as the components of this grouping have been changed and it is no longer comparable to the prior year.



Social News

by Jarilyn Cerruti, Social Chair



Jarilyn Cerruti and Mayor Frank Jordon at THD's booth. In background, Art Chang and Gerry Crowley. (Photo courtesy of Charles Farruggia.)

Our booth at the North Beach Street Fair this year was a very busy spot! Banners and sweatshirts flew high and low, bringing many people to the intersection of Vallejo and Grant to ask about THD and sign up to help with the upcoming tree planting project. Thanks so much to the following members who staffed our booth on Saturday and Sunday: Dawne Bernhardt, Charlie Farruggia, Gerry Crowley, Pat Cady, Daranne Schott, Mary and Chuck Baker, Ken Scudder, Art Chang, Kellin Defiel, Billie Atlas, Linda Toan, Joe Luttrell, David Kennedy, Tom

Havey, Sally Gould, Jerry Hurtado, Sondra Leque, Carole Wagner, Clyde Steiner and Teddy Adams.

Taking advantage of the beautiful weather, THD members gathered on the patio at the Bocce Cafe to enjoy that restaurant's ambiance as well as some delicious hors d'oeuvres and cocktails. Thank you once again to Willet for his gracious hospitality.

In keeping with a seasonal approach, the August cocktail party was held at Basta Pasta in the "skyroom" and on the deck.

Board members attending shared information and ideas about committee involvement and upcoming activities. The newly formed NICE Committee Chairs Dawne Bernhardt and Arthur Chang made presentations highlighting the history of the Hill and contributions made by its residents.

Symphony goers will once again enjoy the sounds of the San Francisco Symphony led by Maestro Michael Tilson Thomas at the All San Francisco Concert Thursday, September 7, 1995 at 8 p.m. It includes a new work by Lou Harrison as well as a selection of favorites by Purcell, Mozart, Saint-Saens, Villa-Lobos and Gershwin.

The fall membership dinner is planned for Monday, September 18 (details to be announced). Our speaker will be Patrick McGrew, chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and author of *Landmarks of San Francisco*. It promises to be an interesting and informative session, so circle that date on your calendar.

The following Sunday, 9/24, is our annual picnic at Coit Tower. As in the past we will have food, fun, festivities and fantastic raffle prizes for those who climb to the top of our Hill for this special event. Please call Jarilyn Cerruti at 399-1022 if you would like to help.

N.I.C.E. and Nicer - Report on Neighborhood Improvement Committee

by Dawne Bernhardt and A.S. Chang

The Neighborhood Improvement Committee which we co-chair has a new name: Neighborhood Improvement, Conservation and Enhancement Committee (N.I.C.E.) and we have a host of new ideas. N.I.C.E. will be devoted to activities that conserve the Hill's social and physical character, and improve and enhance our environment and quality of life. Our Committee will:

Create incentives. Dwellers' good efforts will be reported in *The Semaphore*. Awards will be made at THD social functions to individuals who have made the Hill a nicer place to live. We will present our first award at September's membership dinner to Julianne Christensen for her efforts in organizing, with Friends of the Urban Forest, our neighborhood's Tree Planting Project, which started August 26 and continues through December.

Support and promote projects that achieve the Committee's objectives for activities that have lasting impact and benefit the neighborhood. Every member can participate. For example, lend a hand on tree planting days and join us for a *free lunch*. Call Maud Hallin for details at 781-3761. If you can't or don't want to roll up your sleeves and get dirty, participate passively. Nominate a friend or neighbor you think deserves the recognition of a N.I.C.E. Award and call or write us. Our Committee will consider all nominations.

Examples of the types of projects we want to reward include, but aren't limited to, street planter boxes: aesthetically colorful paint jobs, and restorations of architectural details consistent with a building's style. Keep an eye out for architectural designs of merit. We want to acknowledge undertakings that are environmentally satisfying and socially rewarding, and projects that have historical or cultural value.

Long-term goals include supporting and promoting (with Artists Embassy International and the Earth Society Foundation), locating in North Beach a statue of Saint Francis of Assisi by sculptor Harriet Moore. Dedication of the statue would be accompanied by children planting four small trees, each representing a member country of the United Nations. A twin statue will be located in New York's U.N. Headquarters. Saint Francis is considered by many as the patron saint of nature and God's creatures, especially children, and is dubbed by sculptor Moore as the Soul of San Francisco.

We want to assemble a pictorial, written and oral history of Telegraph Hill for public exhibit. The curatorial perspective is to show the growth and evolution of the Hill. We ask anyone who has materials that can support this effort to contact us; or, better, join the N.I.C.E. Committee and help put this exhibit together. Another goal is to create a film/video documentary of the Hill's history, showing the many colorful stages of its evolution. For example, about a hundred years ago one of the City's first charitable organizations (now the Tel-Hi Center), was founded to save the waifs of Telegraph Hill. At the other end of the scale is the present-day scramble for high-priced real estate and development. The documentary would be a logical extension of the exhibit material, produced similar to Ken Burns' PBS documentaries.

Because most of the activities described here will require funding beyond the resources of THD, one way you can participate is by donating and fundraising. Any type of contribution you wish to make to support any of N.I.C.E.'s goals is welcome and will reward you, as a THD member. To participate in our activities and share our learning experiences, call Dawne or Art.

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Parking & Transportation Committee Report

by Jerry Hurtado, Co-Chair

Coit Tower Changeable Message Signs

The Department of Parking and Traffic will soon install three changeable message signs on Lombard Street, at Stockton, Grant and Kearny, to provide information to motorists wishing to travel to Coit Tower. This is to reduce congestion on the hill by informing visitors as parking conditions change. Parking committee co-chair Paul Switzer and architect Rod Freebairn-Smith are working with DPT traffic engineer Tom Folks on this project. Rod reports that an art deco typeface about the same design period as Coit Tower was chosen for the new signs expected to be in place March 1996.

Proposed New Garage

Eventually, as moneys become available, DPT plans to construct a new parking garage to replace the existing North Beach Garage on Vallejo Street. Meantime, the management of the existing garage will continue to operate on a month-to-month contract with the City to provide parking for our merchants, residents and visitors. Herb Kosovitz and June Osterberg are monitoring this situation for THD.

North Beach Post Office

Postal trucks often block a lane of traffic in front of the North

Beach post office on Stockton Street. In January 1996 the truck operation is expected to move to a new postal annex at 2200 Powell Street—construction is now under way. The North Beach Post Office will remain at Washington Square to provide counter service and post office boxes for the neighborhood.

Romolo Street now ONE WAY

The steep grade of Romolo between Vallejo and Fresno is now one-way south thanks to the perseverance of Tom Havey. As a result the neighborhood will gain an additional diagonal parking space on Vallejo at Romolo. The red zone on that corner should be eliminated by September. Watch for the change.

Curb Markings

Sally Gould, Pam Speich and others have been working with DPT to review curb markings, reds and yellows in particular, in the North Beach and Telegraph Hill area. The objective is to reclaim curb space where possible for general parking.

Castle Alley

At the request of the committee, DPT has placed a convex mirror on Green Street where it intersects with Castle Alley. The mirror is to help improve motorist visibility to on coming traffic.

Tour Busses a Source of Problems

Tour busses have been a source of problems for residents in some North Beach locations. There is consideration for a plan to regulate tour bus access to the neighborhood. Ray Dunaway and Jeff Laffranchini are representing THD before the Parking Commission regarding this issue.

Blocking Traffic on Grant Avenue

North Beach Pizza's delivery cars continue to double park on Grant Avenue. This business practice serves to constrict and slow the passage of traffic on Grant Avenue, particularly in the evenings. DPT knows about it. Its traffic enforcement division has made some efforts to control it; however the problem persists.

Initiative to Abolish DPT

Sue Cauthen, THD's representative to the League of Neighborhoods, contacted THD VP Gerry Crowley requesting her to poll the Executive Committee to see if there was support for the Prop H initiative on the November ballot to abolish the Department of Parking and Traffic. Support from the Executive Committee was not forthcoming.

Continued on next page

Parking...

Continued from previous page

Since then, an argument against Prop H, generated by DPT, will appear on the ballot as if it was conceived by neighborhood associations. The issue will be discussed 9/12 at THD's full Board meeting and DPT will be invited to make a presentation.

Gail Switzer's Parking & Traffic Committee minutes of June 10, 1995 reflect that the proposed charter amendment regarding parking issues was discussed. The committee took

no position. Several concerns regarding the proposal were made. They included:

- projects currently funded by parking fines (e.g., the courthouse) would be affected,
- much of the money from parking fines goes to fund MUNI and this would be significantly reduced,
- the requirement for automatic promotion of parking control officers after 10 years could result

in some unqualified people being promoted and lead to a situation of too many supervisors.

Join Us for Coffee!

The Parking and Transportation Committee meets at the Gathering Caffe, 1326 Grant Avenue, on the second Saturday of the month at 11 a.m. Our next meetings are scheduled for September 9th, October 14th, November 11th and December 9th. Join us—your ideas are welcomed.

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A Disturbing Trend

by Jim Valenti, Planning and Zoning Co-Chair

I'd like to inform THD members of a pernicious tendency within our neighborhood that seems to be occurring at an increasing rate. The problem starts with overzealous owners, whose justification seems to be that zoning codes do not apply to them, who are willing to employ one or a combination of several different tactics to subvert the permit process.

It has been happening in a variety of forms:

1. Take out a "repair" permit, and then remodel the building.
2. Obtain a variance or building permit approval, start construction and then apply for modifications and hope affected parties don't realize the change until it is approved, or better yet, built.
3. Take advantage of the lack of coordination between City departments by applying for a variance with one set of plans and then for a building permit with

another set that increases the built-up areas.

4. Disregard the permit process altogether and build as quickly and quietly as possible.
5. Provide false information to neighbors and City agencies with misleading statements and incomplete plans.

THD hopes to quickly address these problems and work with the City to tighten up neighbor notification procedures from the myriad of committees, boards, departments and administrative actions the City's agencies use to protect our neighborhood. In the meantime, help protect your rights: get copies of all project drawings and statements from owners at the beginning of the permit process; follow up on all notices you do receive and keep abreast of all developments throughout the life of a project. Keep your eyes and ears open; constant vigilance is the best way to keep abject greed in check.

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Planning and Zoning Committee Report

by Dick Marshall, Planning & Zoning Co-Chair

Several projects of concern to THD are currently in the conceptual, planning or construction phases. Concepts for two developments on the Sansome Street Cliffs are being considered for environmental review, possibly for permit application. One project located on Lot 40, Block 113 (known as 1171 Sansome/88 Calhoun Court) would split the present lot into two parcels. It would build on both the Sansome Street side, and on an extension of Calhoun Street. An environmental hearing is proposed in the near future and all interested parties are urged to attend. A significant change in the environment is at stake. Call the Planning Department at 558-6408 or 558-6378 for the date of the hearing.

Another project, replacement of the demolished 22-30 Alta Street—also on the Sansome Street Cliffs, has been studied in concept and a recent drawing indicates a 6-level building on more or less the footprint of the structure that heavy rains destabilized a few years ago. A great civic park-like asset may be lost if building proceeds. A group has formed to protest development. For details, read "Life On The Edge: An Alta Street Update" in this issue.

New construction has started at 1440-1446 Kearny Street. Much

controversy attended this project during the planning and design development phases. Public reviews were held, variances were issued and finally, permits were issued after approval by both the Planning and Building Departments. An unusual procedure allowed complete demolition of the existing apartment building, and construction of a new building on this lot. Two consecutive (serial) renovation permits were issued at the Building Department counter without the full Planning Department review envisioned for this controversial development. The new building, however, will be the same plan as the one passed during original planning review, and no harm has been done other than procedural by-passing.

Robert Passmore of the Planning Department has assured me that extra vigilance will be exercised in the case of the renovation of a cottage at the rear of the new Telegraph Boulevard Condominiums, and that a full review will take place when building plans are submitted. No demolition permit has been issued for this cottage, and none is expected.

The renovation and expansion project at 576 Greenwich will be up for review for a rear yard variance as measured under current regulations. As it now stands, the project will not conform to the standard provisions of the Scenic Special Use District Ordinance and may require approval of the Planning Commission which met on this issue in August.

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Life on the Edge: An Alta Street Update

by Wells Whitney and J.P. Mark

Several years ago, at the end of Alta Street, the leaning and destabilized Chavez apartment building was torn down by the City. Severe rain storms had undermined the structure, causing it to lean slightly but ominously, and City officials immediately evacuated the building without giving residents time to collect personal belongings. Over the course of the next several weeks, local and national media helped us all watch, worry and coach the unusual spectacle of a teetering apartment building that would not fall.

Eventually it did come down, of course, and for the better part of two years swarms of City engineers and construction crews worked to shore up and re-build the entire lower end of Alta Street. Neighbors throughout the area endured the noise, dirt, parking restrictions and airborne dust and pollution without objections, knowing that it was all a necessary part of restoring safety and stability to the hill. Indeed, it all seemed to have been worth the sacrifice because when

the work was finished, lower Alta Street had seldom looked better.

As for the property, with the building gone the lot went into receivership, the bank holding the deed foreclosed, and lengthy legal battles over liability began. Some of those law suits are still pending, but the bank (Home Savings & Loan) was recently able to disencumber itself by disposing of the property to a real estate developer at a bargain basement price. (Home Savings reportedly held a mortgage in the amount of nearly \$1 million.) Several property owners in and around lower Alta Street attempted to buy the property from Home Savings prior to that event, but liability and insurance issues ultimately proved too burdensome. Today, the beautiful vacant garden lot remains untouched, save for the surveyors' marks sprayed on with fluorescent orange paint. We understand that they are currently proposing to erect a five- or six-story luxury condominium building on the site, a building which would be even larger than the Chavez apartment building.

A number of concerned hill dwellers, including close neighbors who will be most immediately affected by this boiling project, have already formed a new group called the Alta/Filbert Preservation Association as a way of protesting the development. The Association's concerns center around making sure that the edge of the hill does not become destabilized again. In addition,

the group wants to support any initiative that will retain open space, particularly on the cliff faces and fragile edges of the hill.

Our membership currently numbers around 40. To date, we have contacted the City Attorney's office to inquire as to the exact legal status of the property; we have begun discussions with a geological expert, and we have arranged meetings with the owners and potential developers. The considerable expertise in city politics, media relations, and planning and zoning issues of *some* of our members is being called into action.

Officers of the Association have already appeared before the Board of Directors of the THD to inform them of the status of the project, about the goals and objectives of AFPA, and to ask for the general support of the THD membership. No resolution was either asked for or given, but the Board did give informal support to the efforts of AFPA, and appointed Dick Marshall as the liaison between the organizations.

Wells Whitney (398-5077) volunteered to be President of AFPA, while Jane Barrett (398-8166), J.P. Mark (392-6116) and George Tingo, Jr. (956-1001) volunteered to be AFPA officers and to help organize neighborhood efforts. Membership is a nominal \$5. Participation by concerned and involved neighbors, and other hill dwellers, is welcomed.

"Playland" at Pier 39

by Bob Tibbits

As we watch the sheathing of steel girders that rise out of tons of concrete filling the bay next to Pier 39... are we ready for another "tourist attraction"? Some comfort may be derived from the new public amenities imposed by the Bay Conservation & Development Commission as conditions for permitting the construction of "Underwater World". Before the first visitor pays admission to the new aquarium later this year, Pier 39 Limited Partnership is obliged to create over 40,000 square feet of new dedicated public access areas for the enjoyment of San Franciscans free of charge.

The over-water reality of this 40-foot+ aquarium building seems in contradiction to B.C.D.C.'s Special Area Plan for the waterfront which stresses the preservation and improvement of views along the Embarcadero: "Any development on the shoreline, on existing piers, or on new or replacement fill should open to the public the exceptional views of the Bay from this location [Piers 37, 39 and 41]."

In fairness, the commission extracted a number of important concessions under terms of the 27th amendment to the 1977 permit for Pier 39. A bayside plaza with seating areas and a perimeter walkway around the aquarium building (Area A on the map) must be built. The amended

permit also stipulates a new view and public access corridor next to Building Q (Area B) to replace the now blocked view of the Bay from the end of Grant Avenue. In addition, some minor new access will be provided on the second deck (Area C). Further out on the pier, tourists will be able to mill around more freely while videotaping frolicking sea lions from a new observation deck (Area D) overlooking the west harbor.

Across the west harbor there will be enhanced public access to attract more visitors to the spectacular vistas along Pier 41. The permittee will build new seating, add night lighting and install a large model of the Bay in the "first notch" which is closest to the shoreline, according to the revised B.C.D.C. permit.

But the largest new dedicated public access area will be developed not on Pier 39 or Pier 41, but near Pier 43. Here, along the Embarcadero at the foot of Powell Street, the partnership that leases Pier 39 will create 18,000 square feet of new public open space on the deteriorated and unsafe fenced-off apron of Pier 43. Partially funded by a matching \$650,000 grant from the Coastal Conservancy, the ramps under the Railroad Arch will be stabilized and made safe for public viewing of the Bay. (The Port is seeking independent grant funding for the

full restoration of the arch where freight cars used to be loaded onto ferries for the trip to Tiburon.)

As a mitigation measure for covering 24,887 square feet of the Bay surface at the aquarium site, the commission ordered the removal of the remaining rotting pilings that supported the original Pier 43 built in 1913.

This costly Bay fill mitigation was one of the major tenets in the commission's rationale for permitting new Bay fill at Pier 39. B.C.D.C. treats the aquarium as a form of Bay-oriented commercial recreation that is consistent with policies contained in the San Francisco Bay Plan adopted in 1988. New dedicated and enhanced public access would be needed, it was determined, to accommodate the 300,000 to 450,000 additional visitors that will be drawn to "Underwater World"—as many as 1,000 a day during the peak summer season, according to Pier 39 estimates.

If those figures are realized, it will be difficult to rationalize permits for any more "attractions" on Pier 39 (which already has four million visitors a year), such as the recently floated plan to install a 65-foot high, 144 passenger Ferris wheel. Although no applications are technically in

Continued on next page

Playland...

Continued from previous page

the mill at this writing, according to Pier 39's new legal advisor Jay Wallace, trial balloons were launched earlier this year in the Planning Department at the Office of Environmental Review and with the Zoning Administrator. The operators of Pier 39 have made no secret of their desire to move the carousel presently situated at the north end of the pier to the new dedicated public access area on the apron of Pier 43.

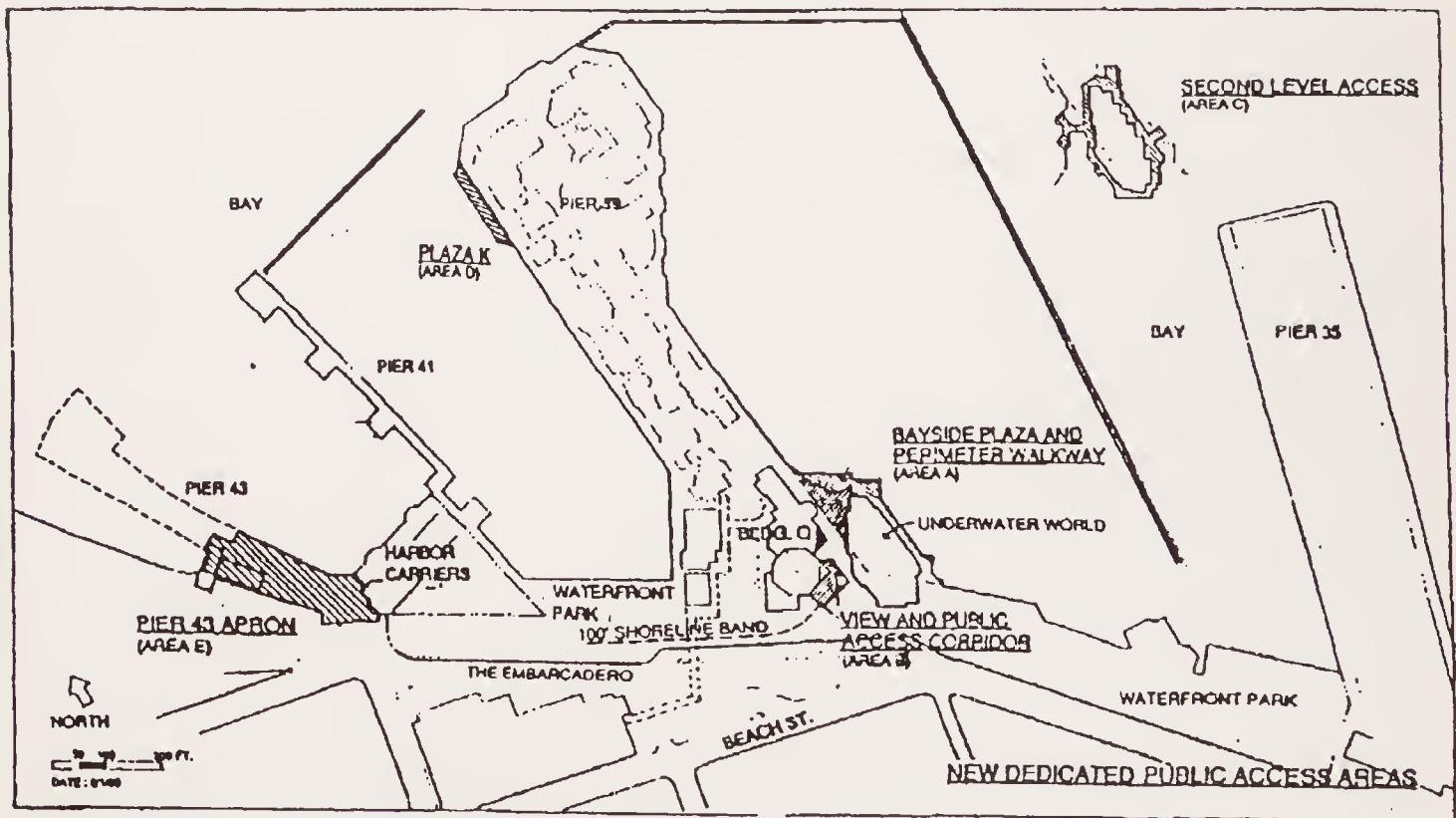
A management spokesman will make an informational presenta-

tion of these plans at Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center on Wednesday, September 6, 1995 at 6 p.m. Members of the Waterfront Committee and other interested parties have been invited.

Would the Port derive any additional rent from a Ferris wheel on Pier 39? That will be up to Port Director Dennis Bouey. Even if the Port Commission allows another lease modification without adequate additional rent in return, a newly constituted Planning Commission might have

reservations about turning Pier 39 into a "Playland at the Pier" amusement park. Moreover, B.C.D.C. could seek additional strong mitigation measures to insure maximum feasible, ticket-free public access that is consistent with the Bay Plan.

The Waterfront Committee will be monitoring this situation on an on-going basis. If you are interested in helping THD formulate a position on this, please contact Bob Tibbits at 986-7227.



Piers 35-43; Dedicated Public Access Areas.

400 Trees - 101, 102, 103...

by Julianne M. Christensen



I see trees
everywhere I go,
now.

I see, with
renewed affection,
the trees I already
love. The essen-

tial palm at the end of Greenwich above Grant. The princess bushes along the Greenwich steps. The mini-forest atop Telegraph Hill. The ginkgoes I see from my window. The fragrant Victorian box around Washington Square. The ficus and liquid amber that, along with the cafes and shops, encourage sauntering down Columbus.

I see trees that were always there but that I never really noticed. Thirty- and forty-foot high majestic beauties enveloping the mansions of Pacific Heights. Lusty, brave trees softening the most dusty and lurid sections of the Tenderloin. Tender, promising new trees taking hold among the warehouses and shipyards at the foot of Potrero Hill. Magnolias spreading their southern canopies. Olives seemingly plucked from some Tuscan hillside. Delicate plums and cherries.

I see trees as I travel. Suddenly, Munich appears to be a city wedged somehow amidst a forest. Enormous poplars turn

one boulevard into a green Grand Canyon. Every major street seems to have its tree theme. The central river defies the encroachment of the city by wrapping itself in a great green swath. Amsterdam's famous canals mirror the trees that endlessly line their banks. The trees of Paris meld with the brick and ironwork, the gargoyles and the Art Nouveau in a seamless, swirling fabric. Even Tokyo has trees—soaring, struggling ginkgoes that shush the metal and glass and crush of people.

I see trees that are not there. I see rows of trees along Broadway from On Lok to KPIX. I see trees along Sansome from Broadway to Green, wrapping up the hill along Vallejo. I see trees at the playground at Stockton and Lombard, and all up and down Greenwich. I see trees on Powell and Stockton and Filbert and Francisco. I see trees at Garfield School and the newly converted elementary school on Broadway. But I am not hallucinating, or even fantasizing about these trees: I'm just projecting. All these trees are real. They're on their way. Soon, there will be holes in the sidewalks. Soon there will be young trees in the ground. Soon, you will see these trees, too.

150 TREES! Currently, we have permits and permit applications for 122 trees. Another 28 locations are pending.

Our first planting, Saturday morning, August 26, will center around Francisco, Greenwich, Filbert and Powell, Stockton and Grant. We expect to plant the first 40 trees that day. Besides our neighbors, whose residences will soon be sporting new greenery, there may be new trees along Midway to block views of the water treatment plant and to replace the large blackwood acacia lost to disease and age last year. The unrelieved asphalt of the playground at Stockton and Lombard will acquire a noise- and wind-softening border of small strawberry trees. Some of Sts. Peter and Paul's missing sycamores will be replaced and a few new ones added.

The next plantings, in the Broadway, Sansome and Battery area and up the hill towards Kearny and Vallejo, will be held in October. The bulk of our current applications—over 80—are in the commercial area around Broadway. The Abbot Corporation at Sansome and Vallejo has requested 15 trees. Levi Strauss wants 14. Musto Properties, owners of 300 Broadway have signed up for 7 and the adjacent

400 Trees...

school for 8. Blueprint Services, Embarcadero Auto, Hunan Restaurant, the Gordon Group Garage at Sansome and Vallejo, the Forked Tongue Restaurant, Lee Mah Electronics and many others have also signed up. Please, remember to thank these merchants and owners for their participation and for their contribution to the improvement of the gateway to our neighborhood. I hope I live to see Broadway featured once again on San Francisco postcards, a street where we love to stroll and linger!

The other wonderful project news is that the magic works. Friends of the Urban Forest was named aptly. It was founded by a circle of friends who loved trees and loved the city. FUF puts a good deal of emphasis on the idea that not only trees sprout from these plantings—neighborhood links and friendships and connections of all kinds grow as well. Faces get attached to names. You learn who lives in the house at the corner. You hear stories about the neighborhood in the old days. New friends stop you on the street. You borrow a pipe wrench and lend a garden hose. You inquire about work, health, vacations and children and your mail gets collected while you're away. It is wonderfully corny and sweet that, in this fast-forward, cynical world, meeting and

knowing your neighbors can be so rewarding. I think that it's possible that for every hour I've worked on the 400 Trees project, I've met one new person. And, let me tell you, I've met lots and lots and LOTS of new people!

This is the inevitable pitch—what are you doing to help? I've met a few people who talk a lot about how great and special North Beach and Telegraph Hill are but who have done precious little to contribute so far. There is a big opportunity here for good karma points. We're making progress towards our goal of 400 Trees, but there is quite a way and only a few months to go. It's the middle innings: time to stretch, gather strength, and press on. Please contact me—Julienne Christensen—at 989-4300 if you are feeling inspired, energetic, or guilty.

Besides continuing to look for coordinators and volunteers, we are working on developing other sub-projects. One involves the alleys in the neighborhood. Sidewalks must be 6 feet wide for trees to be planted, which eliminates the Hill's hallmark alleys and ways. Some, like Castle and Edith and Gerke, have been planted. Others are regrettably bare. We have had many inquiries about the possibilities of extending the planting somehow to these areas. Plantings must not protrude beyond existing obstructions—such as stairs, beams, posts and the like. And the City

hesitates to officially endorse the blocking of sidewalks, however narrow or little-used. It is possible to apply for a variance from the City that might allow vines or narrow shrubs against buildings, or planter boxes. By applying in unison, alley neighbors can save on the cost of the variance request. The possibility of raising project money for this cause has also been discussed. Any volunteers to head the Plant-the-Alleys project?

Another sub-project concerns the steep portion of Kearny below Vallejo. The new "balcony" at the top of this intersection vastly improved its appearance, decreased crime and disturbances, and added a hot new location to the film commission's scouting lists. The steep stretch of Kearny below Vallejo rises up like a billboard as you approach the neighborhood from the south. There has been much talk over the years about greenery, parks and stairs. Some focused effort, coupled with the momentum started with the 400 Trees project, might be timely. Volunteers?

I have said often, regarding this project, that I am not really its leader, only a front man for a great network of people. Many have toiled and pleaded and scrambled for this project. It seemed time to publicly acknowledge as many as I can. Please think kindly of them. Offer them your thanks whenever you get the

Continued on page 22

Computer Snafus

During a transition from one mailing house to another, some names of new THD members may have been lost. Changes you requested to your mailing labels may not have been made. Sorry for the inconvenience, but to ensure that you receive all THD mailings, please report problems or changes to any Board member, or send a note to PO Box 330159. Please report:

- Names/addresses of members who are not receiving *The Semaphore*, or invitations to social events, or renewal notices.

- Name or address changes that need to be made to your mailing labels.

Nailing down a complete, accurate list is a priority goal and we are grateful to members for helping us reach it by October.

Get Ready, Get Set... and GO!

by June Fraps

Yes, it's time to get ready. And there's a NERT class in our neighborhood starting Tuesday, September 5, so there's no excuse for putting it off any longer.

The Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT) training program is a painless way to prepare yourself for the next earthquake. It's a 5-week program (one 3-hour class per week), at Fort Mason, and if you miss a class, you can make it up later. You'll learn how to be self sufficient for those first few days after a disaster occurs when emergency aid is likely to be unavailable. Remember '89?

So, call the SF Fire Department's NERT Coordinator at 558-3456, and GO to Fort Mason for NERT training.

THD Waterfront Committee

by Bob Tibbits, Chair

An informal presentation will be conducted for THD, North Beach Neighbors and Russian Hill Neighbors by a spokesman for Pier 39 Limited Partners on proposed plans for the permanent installation of a **65-foot Ferris wheel** near the north end of the pier. The carousel now at that location is to be removed and re-installed at Pier 43 in newly created public open space.

The presentation is Wednesday, September 6th, at 6:00 p.m. at the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center, located at 660 Lombard Street (Powell/Mason)

Editor's Note: If your *Semaphore* didn't reach you in time to attend this meeting, look for Bob's progress report in the next *Semaphore*.

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History on the Hill

by Joe Lutrell

Valetta's Garden

Desmond Heslett saw me at his front door, and waved me inside. A big man in his early 90's, still alert, he offered a chair and asked what I wanted. The story, I said, of Valetta's Garden and the compound of eight cottages over which she and he had jointly presided some sixty years.**

It all began, he recalled, with their taking a Marina apartment when first moving to San Francisco; Valetta never quite said as much, but she was clearly not happy there, so in 1933, Des located a place on Montgomery Street to which they soon moved.

Not long after, Valetta came upon the Greenwich Steps at the end of their block—steps which at that time soon turned into a path “dribbling down the hill among a few goats.” There, in what is now a vacant lot, stood a small cottage with a Coldwell Banker “for sale” sign on it.

\$2,000 (its purchase price) was more than the Hesletts really could afford, but they struck a deal anyway and moved around the corner. Des landed a lot of freelance artwork for Philco, they rebuilt the cottage, and the

Hesletts were on Greenwich to stay.

All the while, they had their eye on the compound next door; eight units clustered in several cottages whose charm today, particularly in the setting of Valetta's Garden, is tremendous. So, when the chance came, they bought it.

What is charming now, however, translated into “very basic” then; only one of the units had electricity, and only it possessed a “shower”—a water faucet sticking out of the wall inside a small shed-like structure which may still be seen tacked onto the back of one of the cottages. The Hesletts, with good sense, moved in here, and began the slow process of fixing up one unit, moving into the next, fixing it up, and so forth. Over the years, Des said, they lived in almost all of them.

In the meanwhile, Valetta began her garden. Much of the heart of it lies on the uphill side, in the compound, but a great part of it may be found on the downhill side, across the sidewalk, on what is, legally, a public street; fuschias, sweet peas, banana trees, yellow and white Gabriel trumpets and particularly roses, abound.

The garden must have been in Valetta's genes, for at the same time her mother, Grace Marchant, began the efforts which were to transform the Filbert Steps from a

trash-heap into today's famous garden. It is remarkable how these two women have so changed this corner of San Francisco.

But what of the future of Valetta's Garden? I spoke later in the day with Shawn Hall, owner of the SHED on Union Street and a ten-year resident in the Hesletts' compound. Plans are well advanced, she told me, to preserve both the garden and the compound; they have begun with the establishment of Valetta's Garden Fund, contributions to which are certainly welcomed (Valetta's Garden Fund, 2112 Hyde Street #3, SF 94109). A memorial service at the garden is planned.

It is said that Valetta Heslett inspired Armistead Maupin's creation of Anna Madrigal, the fabled landlady of *Tales of the City*, the book which Maupin wrote while living two blocks away on Lower Alta. The compound over which the Hesletts presided is special, and Valetta's Garden is its physical center. If we are lucky, it will survive and flourish and both Valetta's and Grace Marchant's Gardens will remain unique enclaves on Telegraph Hill.

To stroll through Valetta's Garden, walk downhill on Greenwich from Montgomery; the compound may be seen tumbling eccentrically up the hill at 235 and 237. You are then in the garden's center. To reach Grace

**Valetta Heslett died earlier this year, age 86.

Valetta's Garden...

Continued from previous page

Marchant's Garden, continue down the steps to Sansome, turn right one block through the Levi Strauss complex, then up the Filbert Steps; the garden will begin on your left as the steps turn from concrete to wood. Continue straight up the steps to Montgomery, or take a side-trip down Napier Lane, which begins opposite the garden and dead-ends a little less than one block later.

400 Trees...

Continued from page 19

chance. They're doing this for you!

Thank You!

Christopher Wand, coordinator for the Broadway, Greenwich, Sansome, Battery area. Christopher has earned the Johnny Appleseed High Achievement Award, having signed up over 60 locations—through hours and hours of work, weaseling, and dogged persistence. Christopher has made many promises to maintain trees over the next few years. Volunteers?

Rita Pisciotta and Joel Morgenstern—the first coordinators to reach the 40 tree limit needed for a planting, Rita and

Joel will lead the August 26 planting in the Greenwich, Francisco, Stockton, Powell area.

Victoria Larsen, Gerry Hurtado and Stuart Fuss—coordinators for the Vallejo, Green, Montgomery, Kearny area.

Margaret Maker—coordinator for the Broadway, Greenwich, Mason, Powell area.

David Nong, who contributed his time, patience and creative expertise to design of the 400 Trees flyer, a functional, enticing and essential aid to our labors.

Lillian Ng, who produced a summary of Feng Shui principles related to tree planting for us.

ChiLing Lee and Phyllis Jewell—through Phyllis' intervention and assistance, ChiLing spent long hours translating our Feng Shui page and offered her guidance and recommendations.

Joe Butler—a roving ambassador of trees who has donated hours and hours and helped in incalculable ways, mostly on sticky, complicated, and otherwise challenging issues.

Maud Hallin, who, practicing her usual pattern of boundless philanthropy, has made her garden available for meetings and planning lunches, has cajoled and coerced any number of volunteers, fairy godmothers and kindly uncles (including many on this list) into assisting, and has pitched in frequently when I had to be away or when the "to do" list simply overflowed. I would

also like to publicly forgive Maud for getting me into this project in the *first* place.

Jeanette Good for her great coverage on the project in the Independent.

Darla Bernard, who hosted a meeting for us.

Mel Johnson, our Friends of the Urban Forest contact and coordinator.

Ruby Gim and the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center For lending us the premises for our first planting meeting.

Our Contributors. Many have heeded the call to donate, some extremely generously. The collected funds will be used to pay for the 400 Trees brochure, to rent trucks for transporting trees, to aid school plantings and assist in more costly sidewalk work. They may be applied later to projects like the alley plantings or Kearny Street.

Thanks to David L. Davies, Jack Weeden, Janice M. Le Cocq, Greg B. Lawless, Lyn Clark, Charles and Billie Atlas, and Gerry Crowley.

Our Planters. The owners and tenants whose commitments give flesh (or leaves) to this dream. Without these individuals nothing that we have done would have meaning or substance.

This is beginning to sound like an Academy Award acceptance speech. I'm sure I've forgotten someone. My apologies. Thanks, neighbors!

Trees and Traditions

by Helen von Ammon

*"I think that I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree.
Indeed, unless the billboards fall
I'll never see a tree at all."
Ogden Nash: Song of the Open Road*

Friends of the Urban Forest, with a grant of 400 free trees to North Beach and Telegraph Hill, ensures that Nash's poem will not happen in our neighborhood. Maybe. Not everyone thinks of trees in the same way.

Macondray Lane on Russian Hill is a quaint pedestrian path, often written about in walking guides of San Francisco. As noted by TV viewers of "Tales of the City," Macondray Lane is very special. It's quietly secluded, no cars, has more cats and trees than houses or people. Bernhard von Ammon and his Siamese cat, Miss Ping, shared a small house at the end of the lane, near Taylor Street. A giant conifer leaned slightly toward their home, adding serenity and beauty to the area. Bernhard learned that the tree's roots were on adjacent Chinese owned property and this noble tree was destined to be cut down. The reason, they stated, was that it might fall and injure someone. Bernhard gladly paid liability insurance on the tree; thus it was

allowed to live... for a while. Immediately upon Bernhard's death the tree was cut down. Was this Feng Shui at work?

Trees, some Chinese believe, can represent good or bad, depending on Feng Shui (pronounced roughly fung shway). San Francisco abounds in narrow, dead end streets with houses on both sides and a house at the end facing the open street. A Chinese family residing in the end house might seek advice from a Feng Shui Low (man) about planting a tree in front of their house, or removing one which already grows there. One Feng Shui Low may advise against the tree already in situ. Favorable events are prevented from coming to their house, as good luck is blocked by the tree. A different Feng Shui Low may encourage the family to plant a tree. The tree will protect the exposed house from misfortune, and prevent their possessions from vanishing mysteriously.

Selina Wong is a vibrant, modern woman. As Managing Director of a Japanese cosmetics firm, she intended to open a shop for her business. She knew almost nothing about Feng Shui and wasn't sure she really believed in it. But, what they say, take chances. She sought the advice of a Feng Shui Low. Selina eschewed the shop location he enthusiastically claimed had everything going for it. Likewise his advice to knock out the back wall of her eventual space in

North Beach. She did follow his admonition of where to put the cash box. For the required constantly moving appliance she chose a pendulum clock instead of an electric fan. He advised live plants be situated in designated areas inside and outside the shop. Did that. Feng Shui Low's counsel, sifted through her common sense, evidently worked well. This high end cosmetics business thrives and now includes health products.

Feng Shui counseling can be pricey according to the client's requests. For a stipend of \$300, your guru will look at three locations that you are considering. He will also come into your home and advise how furniture should be arranged. Your kitchen was designed for greatest efficiency, but if the vibes aren't right, only a total makeover will ameliorate his dire conclusions. Feng Shui Low's skills seem to include all situations and purposes. His advice is based on good and bad vibrations from the magic magnet he brings along. The rest is up to you. You'd like a Feng Shui consultation? Ring Joseph Cheung at 415-391-2369 for appointment details. As far as it's known, Feng Shui sessions do not include a money back guarantee.

Broadway: Born of the Barbary Coast

by Marsha Garland, Executive Director, North Beach Chamber of Commerce

Part I Prologue:

After the 1989 earthquake and the subsequent tear down of the Embarcadero Freeway and its North Beach/Chinatown ramps, three parcels of state-owned land on lower Broadway were freed up. The land has since been turned over to the City and will soon be put on the market. Future development of that land could drastically affect the character and use of Broadway.

Consequently 18 months ago, urban planners at the Chinatown Resource Center undertook a study of the Broadway corridor from Columbus to the Embarcadero. The CRC invited other neighborhood groups to participate in the study. The North Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Chinatown Resource Center have taken the lead in moving the study along and in meeting with city officials to make our concerns known.

Other groups involved include: North Beach Neighbors, Telegraph Hill Dwellers, Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center, Fisherman's Wharf Merchants' Association, Golden Gateway Tenants' Association, Community Tenants' Association of Chinatown, Chinese Chamber of

Commerce, Chinatown Merchants' Association, Ping Yuen Residents' Improvement Association and individual Broadway merchants and residents.

The Waterfront Transportation Project office, in conjunction with the Mayor's Office and the Department of Public Works have identified a total of \$33,000 of Broadway parking revenues that will be committed to a four month study, as requested by the Chinatown and North Beach communities. The study will establish development guidelines for the three Broadway parcels prior to their disposition by the Department of Real Estate.

The following article details some of Broadway's exciting history.

BROADWAY: Born of the Barbary Coast

"Kill him! Lynch him!" cried angry mobs as they raced along Broadway to the County Jail. Hundreds of angry vigilantes threw rocks at prison guards. The police, armed only with billy clubs, rushed the shouting crowd striking blows left and right. It was 1852 and the scene was often repeated.

Despite the lawlessness of the times, many criminals ended up in a jail that by 1861 was de-

scribed as a disgrace to the city because of its dark, dank, dripping interior. The grim, brick jail was home to many of the Barbary Coast's worst cutthroats, thugs, murderers, racketeers and thieves.

Built in 1850 at the corner of Romolo, a few steps from today's Columbus intersection, the Broadway Jail provided a fledgling San Francisco with 60 jail cells. The jailer's quarters were on the third floor. With its rear wall smack up against the rocks of Telegraph Hill, moisture seeped constantly through the prison walls from the hill's underground springs.

Long after 1906, the Swiss American Hotel was built on the jail site. It was from one of the Swiss-American's front windows that controversial and brilliant comedian Lenny Bruce either fell or threw himself. (He survived only to commit suicide a couple of years later.) Now Columbus Books occupies the ground floor with senior housing on the renovated upper floors.

Alongside on Romolo Alley, the Basque Hotel was built in 1906. In the early 20th century, many Basque establishments proliferated on or near Broadway.

Continued on next page

Broadway...

Continued from previous page

They were home away from home for the immigrant Basque shepherds who lived north and east on sheep ranches. To this day, the remaining Basque, Des Alpes and Obrero continue to provide inexpensive meals and hotel rooms.

Although the Broadway Jail's courtyard had its own gallows, occasionally prisoners were dragged to the top of Russian Hill. Temporary gallows were erected above what eventually became the Broadway Tunnel. The whole town would turn out for the macabre entertainment. Happy townsfolk picnicked on Russian Hill's grassy slopes and watched the criminal's last throes of life as his body jerked and then dangled from the end of a rope.

Like everything around it, the Broadway Jail was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1906. All that remains of the three story brick building is one thin, brick wall still visible at the rear of the parking lot at 530 Broadway.

Courageous and adventurous are two words that aptly describe early San Franciscans. They had to be. It was a rollicking, anything goes kind of town where gold fever ruled.

One thing, however, terrified our predecessors — Devil's Acre. Just a few square blocks of hell, Devil's Acre was known worldwide as the Barbary Coast.

Before that it was the infamous Sydneytown, run by the "stop-at-nothing" Sydney Ducks, a band of Australian outlaws.

"Build us a safe, wide boulevard one block north of Pacific," local citizens demanded. Pacific, now quiet and dignified, was then the devil's heart, or center of the Barbary Coast.

In 1844, flimsy planking for pedestrians stretched across a tiny lagoon at the foot of the Broadway Cliffs. Shortly afterwards, Broadway Wharf extended 250 feet into the Bay.

Close to the water were warehouses. Nearby, on the eastern slope of Telegraph Hill, was a cemetery with wooden markers. Hotels proliferated where Broadway Wharf met the land: Illinois House, Broadway House, Broadway Hotel, Lovejoy's and the Lafayette.

Along Kearny, Montgomery and Sansome, closer to Market Street, hastily erected, corrugated iron buildings housed grocery stores, butcher shops, drugstores, auctioneering offices, coffee houses, sailors' boarding houses, brothels, taverns, a saddler, a hat merchant, and a tinsmith. Couzen's was the neighborhood slaughterhouse and Broadway was the north end of town.

The southeastern slope of Telegraph Hill was called Little

Chile for the many Chileans in the vicinity and noisy Mexican fandango parlors annexed the Barbary Coast. From time to time in the 1860s, gun toting Mexicans fired their pistols into the air to celebrate military victories in a Mexico then still under Maximilian rule. The pistol shots caused windows to rattle all over the hill and non-Mexican residents complained about the noise.

Even though early maps indicate Broadway existed from the Bay to the Presidio, spurs of Telegraph Hill interrupted its progress in the block between Montgomery and Kearny. Prior to 1864, the only way to traverse the length of Broadway was to scale the goat trails up and over Telegraph Hill, continue on until confronted by Russian Hill and then once again scale that hill via foot paths and goat trails.

In 1864, 45,830 cubic yards of rock were dynamited away from the southern slope of Telegraph Hill, still often called Loma Alta (High Hill). At Montgomery, the hill's height was reduced by 70 feet and at Kearny by 60 feet. Originally there was a plan to level all 280 feet of the hill and dump it into the bay.

Part 2 will appear in the next Semaphore

North Beach Library's Beat Writers Reference Collection

by Gardner Haskell, Library Manager

The North Beach Branch Library's "Beat Writers Collection" consists of over 100 reference books and 14 articles that are either written by or about "Beat Generation" writers. The collection is dedicated to the memory of Peter Winslow. Peter was a North Beach native and resident, singer, songwriter and funk rock guitarist who died in an auto accident at age 26 in 1993. His mother, Jane Winslow, is a North Beach resident and former executive director of the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library.

In his book entitled *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, James Loewen describes African societies that divide humans into three categories: those still alive on the earth, the sasha, and the zamani. "The recently departed whose time on earth overlapped with people still here are the sasha, the living dead. They are not wholly dead, for they still live in the memories of the living, who can call them to mind, create their likeness in art, and bring them to life in an anecdote. When the last person to know an ancestor dies, the ancestor leaves the sasha for the zamani, the dead." Peter Winslow, like some of the writers and poets whose work is contained in our "Beat Writers Collection" is sasha; he still lives in our memories.

The North Beach Library's "Beat Writers Collection" began by taking the various books we owned that are by or about Beat Writers and collecting them on a shelf. Then we began telling people in the neighborhood that we were creating a Beat Collection, and gradually a few books of poetry came in, then an old issue of *Beatitudes*. Another generous donation of twenty original poetry books found their way here.

Then the San Francisco Public Library Administration took up a collection and donated copies of major works that were missing from the collection in the memory of Peter Winslow, and had a brass plaque inscribed "North Beach Beat Collection. In Memory of Peter Winslow." Before we knew it, we had two shelves of books housed in their own glass fronted cabinet. City Lights booksellers and publishers kindly donated original works by Beat writers that were published by City Lights. Now people can come in and not only read background material, biographies and reference materials about the Beat Writers, but can also read examples of what they wrote.

Continued on page 28

Special Events at NB Library

by Jensa Woo,
Children's Librarian

The North Beach Library is proud to announce that a program entitled "The True History of North Beach," will be presented by Patricia Cady and Marsha Garland. The program will be held on Tuesday, September 19th, at 7 p.m.

Each month, the library features various programs for children (ranging from infants through school-age) in order to introduce them to books and also to extend their knowledge and literary experience. Of special interest this month: the TRIP TRAP TROUPE will do a puppet show at the library for young children on Tuesday, September 26th at 10:15 a.m. Three plays will be presented, including the ever-popular tale, "The Gunniwolf." In October, there will be a program on bats for school-age children, presented by Christine Scott of the California Bat Conservation Fund. Join us on Wednesday, October 25th at 3:45 p.m. for an informative program and a close-up look at live bats that are indigenous to California. Please contact Jensa Woo for additional information about these and other programs that will be featured in upcoming months.

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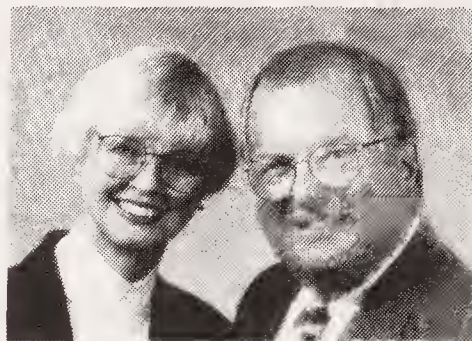
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Beat Writers...

Continued from page 26

The collection is still growing: photographs, articles, magazines—even a tattered menu from The Old Spaghetti Factory Cafe & Excelsior Coffee House advertising spaghetti with meat sauce for \$1.60, and seconds on spaghetti at no additional cost—are now bulging out of a third shelf.

But North Beach Library's "Beat Writers Collection" is more than shelves of books. The people who wrote the poems and stories lived, breathed and thought a certain way. They came to be known as members of the Beat Generation.

Kerouac created the term Beat Generation in a 1948 conversation with John Clellon Holmes, who then wrote a New York Times article entitled "This is the Beat Generation."

The *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* (2nd ed.) defines Beat Generation as "...members of the generation that came of age after World War II who, supposedly as a result of disillusionment stemming from the Cold War, espoused forms of mysticism and the relaxation of social and sexual inhibitions..."

Ann Charters discusses the meaning of "Beat Generation Writers" in her foreword to the seminal two volume reference work she edited entitled, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 16, Parts 1 and 2: The Beats:

Literary Bohemians in Postwar America. She states "...On the simplest level it is a label loosely linking a number of American avant-garde writers sharing diverse aesthetic and social concerns in the mid-twentieth century..."

Charters goes on to explain that "In 1956 and 1957, Allen Ginsberg's poem 'Howl' and Jack Kerouac's novel *On The Road* seemed to many readers to signal the presence of something new in American writing in the vivid description of 'Beat' characters who rejected materialistic values in their search for a deeper meaning to life."

Although the Beat scene and a few early writings took place in Manhattan, "...the literary movement surfaced as a public event only after Kerouac and Ginsberg went to the West Coast... first the public's attention was aroused by a series of poetry readings in San Francisco and Berkeley in 1955 and 1956 featuring writers who would later be called 'Beat,' such as Gary Snyder, Michael McClure, Philip LaMantia, Philip Whalen and Lawrence Ferlinghetti... then Ginsberg's poem 'Howl,' was published by Ferlinghetti's small press, City Lights... and it caused one of the most celebrated censorship trials of its time."

Because so many talented writers associated with Kerouac and Ginsberg or the San Fran-

cisco Poetry Renaissance were also publishing in the fifties and sixties, the "Beat" literary movement could not be dismissed.

"Flourishing from 1956 to 1968, the Beat Generation was among the shortest-lived generations in our literary history. But as Gertrude Stein observed in her lectures in America, 'One does mean any period of time by a generation. A generation can be anywhere from two years to a hundred years...'"

Many beat writers have come to be recognized as a vital part of American culture: "...Allen Ginsberg is a professor at Brooklyn College and is a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters; Gary Snyder's book, *Turtle Island*, won a Pulitzer, Kerouac's *On The Road* was issued as a Penguin Modern Classic, and the Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry includes Ginsberg, Corso, Snyder, Duncan, Creeley, Ferlinghetti, and Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones).

Although many of the Beat writers lived, at times, in the North Beach area, only a few, including Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Kirby Doyle, Philip LaMantia, and Howard Hart, remain. But the spirit of Beat writers, in the form of their books, is still here.

The Beats are all sasha in the North Beach library.

Beat Writers...

Editor's note: Coincidentally, Peter Winslow's father, writer, poet and North Beach resident, Pete Winslow, who died in 1972, was strongly influenced by the Beat writers. He is featured in *Mark In Time*, an anthology of San Francisco poets. His widow has donated Mr. Winslow's archives to the San Francisco Public Library's San Francisco History Room, Main Library. Included in the collection are Mr. Winslow's published and unpublished manuscripts, as well as correspondence with Brautigan, Ginsberg, LaMantia and other Beat writers. His last book of poems, published posthumously by City Lights, along with other books from his personal library are part of the North Beach branch collection named in honor of his son.



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Telegraph Hill residents can help the environment, win prizes, and pay for neighborhood projects by recycling right during the SF Recycling Program's Fall Can Do campaign. During September, October and November, the SF Recycling Program will combine an educational campaign focusing on the three *least* received materials—tin/steel cans, #1 and #2 plastic bottles, and junk mail—with an incentive program to reward participating individuals and neighborhoods in the curbside and apartment recycling programs.

The Can Do program is sponsored by the San Francisco Recycling Program and the Steel Recycling Institute who will

award \$1,000 for neighborhood projects if the residents of Telegraph Hill, North Beach and Russian Hill recycle 5% more of these materials than the same period last year. If recycling goes up by 10%, the award is \$2,500.

In addition, once a week, the SF Recycling Program will award a prize to a resident who recycles a full range of materials in the proper manner. Representatives will walk the neighborhood and select winners who will receive gift certificates for local restaurants, movie theaters and other prizes. For more information about the Can Do campaign, or about recycling in general, call the San Francisco Recycling Program's 24-hour hotline at 554-6193.

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Reporter's Notebook

by Clyde Steiner

One by one they climb the steps to the second floor apartment on Vallejo. The conspirators are headed for the first of many expected meetings.

The building where they are meeting befits this group. Its plain facade conceals its internal courtyard and row upon row of anonymous doors. Behind the door on the second floor there is no smoke filled room. Instead they meet in a classically appointed apartment with picture windows opening to views of Saint Francis of Assisi Church and the City.

They are a diverse group, each with their own agenda. Some are long-time Telegraph Hill residents, some relative newcomers. They are drawn to this rendezvous because they are all united by an uneasiness with things as they are and an internal call to change things. The meeting will iron out most of their differences, meld their ideas into a common front for a new action committee.

Dawne Bernhardt, co-chair with Arthur Chang, presides at the first meeting of this budding venture. They are joined by Susan Calendar, Ken Scudder,

Pat Cady, Gerry Crowley, Jerry Hurtado, Dorothy Chang, and this reporter. They decide to call themselves N.I.C.E., operating under the wing of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

N.I.C.E. agrees that its goals are Neighborhood Improvement, Conservation and Enhancement. They want to do more than rid the hill of graffiti, more than preserve the history of this odd-ball place, more than foster cultural and social events for its residents. They want to do it all.

As all activists, they are impatient to spring into action, scheduling their first public appearance at the THD's August

27th event. N.I.C.E. will present its first award to the persevering souls who are planning to plant 400 trees on our sidewalks. They corralled one of the grand old movers and observers of the Beat explosion here, to publicly tell it like it was at a THD event. They are scheming to get funds to place public sculpture on the streets.

This is not an exclusive group of conspirators. You can be a co-conspirator and put in your ideas and help make them fly by walking up the steps to Dawne's apartment at the next meeting on the 1st Tuesday of each month. Phone first 982-3314.

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See page 6 for more neighborhood restaurant listings.

Obits

by Billie Atlas

They were two people from different walks of life: one, a wealthy Telegraph Hill philanthropist; the other, a Sicilian immigrant and North Beach cafe proprietor. This summer, with the deaths of THD member Sallie M. Eccles and Caffè Malvina owner Franco P. Bruno, we lost two neighbors who embodied all that is best in our community.

SALLIE M. ECCLES

Sallie Eccles, widow of Marriner Eccles who was chairman of the Federal Reserve under presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, grew up on Long Island, New York, and was a graduate of Mt. Holyoke College.

Her neighbors on Lombard Street remember her as a friendly, attractive woman who, until the past year, drove her own car and sometimes tended the plants around her distinctive seven-story apartment building. Constructed in 1940 for Mr. and Mrs. Louis Ghiradelli and purchased by the Eccles in the early sixties, the building is a familiar landmark easily identified from miles away by the large American flag waving high above the roof.

Viewers of the MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour on KQED remember Mrs. Eccles as a donor mentioned at the end of the broadcast for financing one day's national

syndication of the program. Visitors to the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum and the Academy of Sciences during the "Free Wednesdays" evening hours, remember Mrs. Eccles as the person who made it possible for working people to attend by underwriting a program to pay staff members and security guards for the extra hours. The World Affairs Council of Northern California remembers that for more than 30 years she gave generously of her time and money to support its educational goals.

In a San Francisco Chronicle interview, Mrs. Eccles' son-in-law Dick Griffith described her as a woman of strong convictions who gave to many causes, but always made sure that her support would be consistent with her belief that "everyone should have equal access to the best of art, music and education."

FRANCO P. BRUNO

It was the second morning after the earthquake. Many of us, groggy after another sleepless night of aftershocks, wandered down toward Washington Square Park from our non-functioning kitchens on the Hill. Another morning without coffee. All the shops were closed; the streets were empty; and then the miracle happened. The doors to Caffè Malvina were open! Proprietor

Franco Bruno had brewed a huge urn of hot coffee. A long line of grateful neighbors, some barefoot, some in robes and slippers, patiently waited in line for their first cup of coffee in two days, served by a smiling Franco. The worst was over.

Former THD president Jeanne Milligan, a long-time friend of Franco's, remembers him as "a grand person, quiet, shy, modest, but who always had time for people. If you had a problem, he helped you figure it out." His cafe also became the UPS and Fed Ex delivery box for friends who were out of town or otherwise unavailable. "He knew everyone's schedule," says Jeanne.

THDer Jane Winslow agrees. "He was a sweet man and he loved North Beach," she says. Jane remembers his many kindnesses to her and her family, including one Thanksgiving when he lent her extra chairs for a large gathering. Jane recalls that she first met Franco when he opened a housewares store on Stockton Street not long after arriving from Italy in 1956. Years later, when she saw him again at Malvinas, "He remembered that I had come into his store when my son was still in a stroller."

Continued on page 34

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It's Time to Take Another Look

by June Fraps

October brings our best weather (with luck) and a perfect time to take a fresh look at our neighborhood. Friends of the Urban Forest leads off the month with a walk down the Filbert steps Saturday, October 2, led by a knowledgeable "forester." Meet at the entrance to Coit Tower at 10 a.m.

City Guides' Telegraph Hill Hike is offered twice during the month, Thursdays, October 5 and 19. It starts at the Marconi monument, Lombard and Telegraph Hill Boulevard, at 5:30 p.m., and ends at the top of the Hill just in time to catch the sunset.

To take an informative look at the Coit Tower murals (even those not open to public view), meet the City Guide at the

entrance to the Tower at 11 a.m. Saturdays, all year.

Other special neighborhood walks offered by the Guides in October are Russian Hill Sunday, October 8, starting from the foot of the Vallejo steps at Mason at 2 p.m., and a Literary Tour of North Beach. That starts from City Lights Books at noon on two Saturdays—you'll have to pick up a schedule to find out the dates of these Saturdays.

The "staples" of the City Guides local walks in our neighborhood that are offered year-round: North Beach, starting from Sts. Peter and Paul at 10 a.m. Saturdays, and Chinatown, also Saturdays at 10 a.m., starting from Portsmouth Square (Kearny and Clay).

For schedules and more information, call City Guides at 557-4266, and Friends of the Urban Forest at 543-5000. All walks are free.

Obits...

Continued from page 32

When a huge rent increase forced Franco out of a previous Caffè Malvina location on Union Street, Jane became part of a group which lobbied unsuccessfully for commercial rent control for small businesses. However, says Jane, their efforts resulted in the establishment of the City's Small Business Advisory Commission by then-mayor Dianne Feinstein.

Franco was deeply moved by all the effort on his behalf. He loved his adopted city and the North Beach neighborhood where he worked for 39 years. His many friends and his involvement in the life of our community will keep his memory alive for many years to come.



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You can make a difference! Join one of THD's committees, meet and work with your fellow Hill Dwellers to improve life on the Hill.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Crime Prevention. Pat Lorentzen, 781-0456. Organizes S.A.F.E. neighborhood watch groups and works with Police Department on local crime problems. Participates in Police Community Relations Committee.

Hills Angels. Mia Morill, 982-4850. Getting families together for fun with their children and to work on projects to improve our environment on Telegraph Hill.

Landmarks and History. Joe Luttrell, 255-6400. Conducts walking tours that highlight Telegraph Hill's colorful past and historic buildings.

N.I.C.E. Dawne Bernhardt, 982-3314; A.S. Chang, 331-9595x733. Promotes projects and programs that preserve the character of the Hill.

N.E.R.T. June Fraps, 392-1187. Energizes members to take emergency disaster response training program sponsored by the City.

Neighborhood Liaison. Sue Cauthen, 391-0737. Represents THD on League of Neighborhoods.

Parking and Transportation. Gerry Hurtado, 788-7723; Paul Switzer, 788-8667. Represents THD residents before City agencies on traffic control, curb markings and MUNI service, cooperating with other neighborhood groups.

400 Trees. Julie Christensen, 989-4300. Coordinates plantings of 400 trees in North Beach and Telegraph Hill from July to December, 1995, through a California State grant obtained by Friends of the Urban Forest.

Planning and Zoning. Jim Valenti, 398-0076; Dick Marshall, 834-1012. Assists neighbors with zoning issues and Discretionary Reviews; represents THD positions before Planning Commission and works with developers and the City to protect neighborhood character.

Waterfront/Embarcadero. Bob Tibbits, 986-2622. Monitors DPW activities along the Embarcadero roadway and participates in planning committee meetings.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Budget. Maud Hallin, 781-3761. As prescribed in By-Laws for Treasurer.

Membership. As prescribed in By-Laws for Financial Secretary.

Program. Jarilyn Cerruti, 399-1022. Arranges social events, including quarterly membership meetings and get-acquainted social functions; organizes annual picnic.

Semaphore. Pat Cady, 397-2175. The editor and staff produce a quarterly magazine for THD members.

Wanted to Rent

Garage, parking space or driveway in the Grant/Lombard vicinity. Gerry Crowley, 445-5166 or 781-4201.

THD Members & Semaphore Readers

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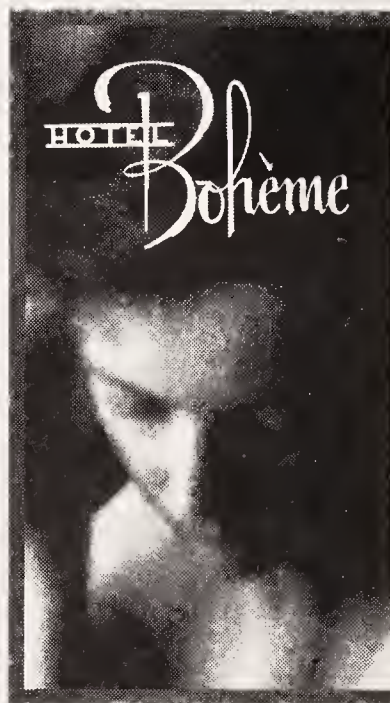
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THD CALENDAR

NERT Training, Fort Mason, September 5.

All San Francisco Concert, September 7.

THD General Membership Dinner, September 18.

THD Coit Tower Picnic, September 24.

Bocce Ball Tournament, NB Playground Bocce Ball Court,
Mason/Lombard Sts., September 27 and 28.

Friends of the Urban Forest Filbert Steps Walk, October 2.

City Guides Telegraph Hill Hike, October 5 & 19.

"Dancing Under the Stars", Washington Square Park, live music
by JD & Company, October 6, 7:30-11:30 p.m.

Italian Heritage Parade, October 8, 1-4 p.m.

North Beach Walk, every Saturday, 10 a.m. Meet at Coit Tower.

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